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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#) [SY](#) [IR](#) [TC](#) [JO](#) [EG](#)
SUBJECT: PA ENVOY SHAATH ON INTRA-PALESTINIAN
RECONCILIATION; ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN NEGOTIATIONS

Classified By: Ambassador Margaret Scobey
Reasons: 1.4 (B) and (D)

¶1. (C) Nabil Shaath, leader of the Fatah delegation to the intra-Palestinian talks in Cairo, briefed the Ambassador on progress in an October 28 courtesy call. He reported that the Egyptians have moved the planned Palestinian reconciliation meeting from November 9 to November 10 in order to accommodate the anticipated Quartet meeting with the Israelis and Palestinians. Shaath was unsure if PA President Abbas would attend the November 10 meeting in Cairo, but confirmed that Abbas had refused a Hamas-Fatah meeting in advance of the broader meeting, and said that Hamas leader Khaled Mishal would only agree to attend once Abbas' attendance was certain.

¶2. (C) If the parties sign the Egyptian-proposed preliminary agreement on November 10, Shaath said that Palestinian committees would be formed to finalize key issues (e.g. elections, security, and the role of PLO agreements) within 6 days. Following this, the two sides would be expected to sign a final agreement in early December. Shaath reported that Arab League Secretary General Moussa had told him October 27 that an "Arab monitoring group" would be ready to assist once the Palestinians sign the final agreement. This group would make reports to the Arab League and would serve as a "political deterrent" to a potential breakdown of the agreement.

¶3. (C) Shaath was satisfied with Egypt's handling of the intra-Palestinian discussions, and said that PA President Abbas had agreed to the Egyptian-proposed preliminary agreement. He commented that Hamas has consistently tried to insert terms and conditions to delay the process, and that the Egyptians have effectively refused to accept these proposals. He predicted that the interim government, as proposed by Egypt, would be led by current PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, whom Hamas recognized as necessary to secure international funding and legitimacy. The remainder of the cabinet would be composed of ministers not directly affiliated with any political faction. Shaath admitted that it was possible that Hamas may refuse to sign and/or implement the agreement, but thought that Hamas' desire for international recognition may sway the movement toward agreement. He claimed that Syria was being helpful with respect to Hamas leadership in Damascus, and that both Syria and Iran were showing more "flexibility" in anticipation of a new American administration.

¶4. (C) Shaath claimed that Egypt was developing a plan for an "Arab advisory security force" in Gaza to be deployed when the agreement is finalized. The Egyptians would lead the force, and had reached out to the United Arab Emirates and Jordan for troop contributions, according to Shaath. He said that Hamas and Israel were resisting the idea. The Ambassador suggested that any such Arab force would be in the difficult position of providing security for Gaza, a tall order with serious risks. Shaath said that the force would be in Gaza as a "deterrent" and not a "fighting force," and referenced the previous presence of Egyptian security

advisors in Gaza.

15. (C) Shaath said there has been internal Fatah discussions as to next steps on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Should the Palestinians continue with negotiations, pursue a "one state solution," or return to violent resistance? He reported that there is a Fatah consensus to continue negotiating with the Israelis. But non-violent demonstrations against Israeli settlement activity would also continue. He recognized that a new intifada, or a return to armed struggle, would be "suicidal."

16. (C) Overall, Shaath was optimistic on prospects for continuation of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. He commented that there is a consensus within Israel, from the left to the center-right, that negotiations should continue. Shaath opined that if negotiations were to continue, and Egypt could succeed in facilitating intra-Palestinian reconciliation, the environment for progress would be improved for the next American administration.
SCOBAY